128

52 Tavistock Sqre.

Sunday

28th April

1929.

Dearest

Here at last are the cheques; ~~on~~ I hope correct, & I have added the £2 you wrote about on the post card. I have left no time to write, as we have Mauron & Morgan upon us. Roger has more than surpassed himself, according to Morgan. He has gone down to Helen in the country leaving everything in complete chaos. Mauron is entirely unprovided for — Morgan — Mary are getting up a lecture at 37 on Wednesday; no preparations have been made at Oxford; Margery Fry has disappeared — the poor man is thinking of returning to France in despair. So we have had to ask him in, & instead of writing that long letter full of gossip I must fly. I know I had a million things to say. I lunched with Sibyl — I sat between Sir P. Sassoon — an underbred Whitechapel Jew, & Harold — about 37 — they want to have it till the beginning of June, as Harold thinks his fate will be decided by the Election; but naturally doubt that you can agree. Also; do you mean that you want the premium paid in one lump sum, or yearly? This last would suit them better if they took it. I doubt that these lunch parties are worth while — I had to dash into a shop & buy a bright red coat in a hurry, & gloves, & shoes; & then one only has ten minutes rational talk with Max Beerbohm, who is infinitely weary & discreet, & needs softly purring to get anything out of before we're interrupted. For the rest it was dull; & I

could sit there more happily over my own fire with a bun on a toasting fork. I dashed into John's pictures afterwards, & there was so shocked that I came out again. You can't conceive — if I'm to be trusted — the vulgarity, banality, coarseness & commonplaceness of these works, all costing over £400 & sold in the first hour. Angelica with a gallipot would do better already. There I met old Dora shuffling along like a half healed sheep; has she adenoids? or why does she click at the back of her nose? She said that Daphne is no more unhappy in Vienna than in London. We are dining with the Keyneses; & I am taking Judy to Baa Baa Black Sheep, since I can't go on entirely neglecting them, & I gather nothing ever does them a good turn: but this may be servants gossip. Lottie has again violently quarrelled with Nelly over the grocer's boy, left her in the lurch ~~& [illegible]~~, & gone pillion riding into the country. And Alice, looking out of the top floor ~~room~~ window saw a one horse van draw up. out got a man with a key & unlocked a car that was standing there & was about to steal a bag when Alice screeched stop thief so loud that the milkman joined in the chase, the man dropped his key & bolted in the one horse van — infinitely to the excitement of everyone. This is all the servants gossip. I am seeing Christabel, & Mary, & I believe we are taking the bull by the udders as you would say & having Faith to dinner. But what's the use of all this when I want to be talking to you instead? I daresay we shall be ruined in the libel action, if Douglas goes on with it, in which case I shall retire to my wood at Cassis. Here it's bitter cold, ink black, & no different from January save for six daffodils & two hares. But I doubt if what I write makes sense. What can Roger be about? He was talking of Mauron in January, & now not a notice has been sent out, or a thing done. I've not heard from him, but was supposed, according to Morgan, to be organising a lecture. I will write again in a day or two: but do write Dolphin — B.

HAMILL 2/10/64

Lord Alfred says he is going to bring a libel action against us; but so far nothing has happened. However, I am in trouble in America for saying that Henry James didn't write English

Sunday
5th May
1929

Monks House
Rodmell

Dearest Dolphin,

Now attend to the following plans:

We have just had out the map of France & the calendar. Would it be possible for ~~[illegible]~~ me to come on the 3rd or 4th of June for a week or ten days? As at present arranged, Leonard with motor, probably with Julian, on the 11th to Perigueux, where it is proposed that I should join him on the 13th or 14th. What is suggested is that you & Duncan should consider making a short tour with us; taking me in your car to Perigueux; going on for a day or two with us into desirable places, & then bringing Julian back with you. Please consider the

129a

plan, which can be modified of course to suit you. But I think I shall certainly come to Fontcreuse then, or so could you speak to Jean, paying her all my compliments. I shall bring some writing I expect, & shall be off your hands in the early morning; but I can do this perfectly in my bedroom, ~~[illegible]~~, so dont bother about the tower or any other sitting room. I rather hope, I confess, that I shall be alone — I mean, that you wont have other visitors — But Leonard says that Roger, whom he saw at the Mauron lecture, means to go to Cassis very soon. I must admit I am rather excited at the thought of seeing you.

Here we are for the week end — what a divine relief after London! Next year, with my new room, I shall certainly come here much oftener — if you were at Charleston, I should spend the summer months — what are called so. It pours & blows & not a flower scarcely is out; but still

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as intensely to be preferred to the telephone & the pump & Dottie dropping in, & Colefax ringing up. Even Christabel I could spare; the truth is with age one becomes crusty & solitary, save for a few cronies who humour ones crotchets. However, you bring away I do my best to frisk. How could I go to Lucy's funeral, seeing that I was here? All that remains of her in my mind is a cows black blubbering cunt: why that image persists I know not. Nor have I heard from Ethel. My letter was not from the heart; it rang, as they say, hollow.

Julian came to lunch, without Playfair, I'm glad to say & we had a long & animated discussion: about Clive & Quentin, whose state he finds very deplorable:— because he says— but dont in Gods name let this lie about— Clive is an elderly roué whose mind has gone grey & bald; but Quentin ought to know better— I gather the talk of love had rather bored him. He is very mature— one talks to him as to ones equal. He is in the thick of the apostles of course, but what is so charming is that he merges their bleak integrity with a general goodwill; & the most violent enthusiasms. We got into a long argument about poetry & then he drove me, at the risk of

my life, to Berwick market to buy coffee & then
to the London Library — I thought we were smashed
again & again, as the car is very stiff still, &
he hasn't quite got the hang of it & doesn't
know one street from another. He is
coming up on Wednesday again, ostensibly to see
Topsy who writes him moaning letters he says:
very miserable & out of her element alone in
London; but his real motive is to run off his
500 miles. I hope he will stay the night &
come to a small literary party, — only Blunden
& I think Plomer & Eddy & perhaps Roger.

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But I haven't seen Roger. He went at once
on landing to a new doctor, who knows exactly what is
wrong — a thickening of one small artery — & says
it is not serious & can be cured: This I had from
Helen on the telephone, Roger having that
instant left to take Mauron, I think, to Oxford.
So he is at last shouldering his burden, or
Morgan would have perished. I dont
myself see the phenomenal charm of Mauron —
he's a heavy blind man, something like Kot,
if you remember him, more Teutonic than French,

very nice & slow & genuine, but not, to me, wildly exciting in the intellect or body. But then we only had three hours; in which I was the only conversationalist, my French coming in & out like the worms on the lawn last night. As we were going to bed, Leonard called me to see a marvel of nature, which it was, some ten million worms red & wet like rubber tubes writhing in all directions. It was precisely my idea of the floor of Hell — they made the grass heave & billow — you wouldn't believe it — wherever the torch lit, there were worms. I shall dream of them, I said to Leonard, & sure enough I dreamt all night of you & Hugh Walpole. Which brings me — you see how the mind of a writer works — no nonsense about reason or order or logicality, — to Census. I am sure your diagnosis is right — he is inwardly convinced of his greatness, & nothing will rouse him. But his conduct has a certain, no doubt unconscious, vileness. At least, he is fastening like a leech on poor Miss Ritchie — & makes all plans on the

129c v

assumption that she is morally bound to collaborate with him for ever; being I suppose, inwardly aware that his own mind is empty as a silk hat — which brings me — I dont see why — to Rothenstein, who in the most creepycrawly oblique & underhanded way has approached me, through a friend of Tom Eliots, & then through Tom, to sit. Tom says he makes one look so noble, & loves it. I say, not for all the opals of Peru. Rothenstein is said to blame it on to the intolerable conceit of Bloomsbury. We are not popular — there can be no doubt.

There are two pieces of ~~fur~~ furniture I want bug. so do mark them down — one a ponderous, not necessarily in good condition; the other a sideboard, or cupboard for the dining room here. I am immersed in questions of floors, windows & paint; & have a wild hope that work may start & the rooms be done by August. If only Kennedy & Durrant between them hadnt wasted 3 months & £15! But it was all our fault, I suppose. I will give Vita your messages. All depends on the General Election. I think. — Harolds chance of coming to London I mean. By the way, Julian was elected unanimously to the Cranium, & poor Sadie heavily blackballed. Write. Write. B.

NYPL

HAMILL 2/10/68

No news from Brown about the Drawing. Am I to do anything?

130a

Saturday May 18 1929

Monks House
Rodmell.

Dearest,

I think Leonard has given up the idea of motoring, as it seems too difficult; & as at present arranged we shall both come for a week to Fontcreuse about June 4th — that is if the Teeds can have us. I'm not quite sure about dates but will let you know. It hardly seems worth while for Leonard to bring the car when he has such a short time. Julian was doubtful whether his springs would survive the French roads & therefore rather wanted a lift, but no doubt he will manage. He meant, he said, to leave the day after the Apostle dinner. I dont think he's gravely dangerous as a driver, but his springs & gears were very stiff, & he was not quite used to the new car the day he drove me. He came in last week after dinner, & was a great blessing — launching out into aesthetics in French with Mauron, discussing native poetry with Blunden — sitting at the feet of Miss Jenkins, who is only the doze of a fine grey mare. He found her very attractive he said. I must say I think he does you great credit. If he had a little more cut & fashion to his jaw, he would be in every way desirable. As it is, he may get thin, & he has mentally & morally all the qualities anyone can want. He is very bitter about Clive, & had written a paragraph in a review for the Granta saying something about "Mr Clive Bell who mixes aesthetics & love affairs" signed Julian Bell: but the editor had wisely cut it out.

I have just had a long letter from Clive — rather distressing I
think & deplorable, all about another mystery which is
making life too glittering, but he cant tell me what — as if
I didnt know all I ever want to know; but one doesnt
want to know, no more than if Lottie's in love with the
Cowman or the greengrocer. Even Christabel says she
cant answer Clive's letters; & ~~mi~~ I think everyone is getting to feel
that he's becoming dull & boring. Lord, what a week you
must have had! To go to Cassis & to suffer that!
Better almost remain in Gordon Sq. There at any rate
you cant be talked to for a week entire. Roger, I feel some
scruple about coming. However, its a scruple we seem to
be getting over — at least I gather that Roger is ~~coming~~, starting
almost at once. I think he may stay a night here on his
way — in fact, he should be here now, for Whitsun, but
rather barely we said we must have two days solitude
after the racket of London (which I'll come to before long —
all the gossip is coming, though I'm very cold, sitting in
my lodge, looking at the works building — but that you
dont want to hear about — whats books to me, or me to
Rookeries you say, quoting Shakespeare, as your way I ~~was~~
is) Clive, as I say, is under a cloud in London. I
think, as Leonard & I are perpetually saying, that something
ought to be done about it, in self-protection. Think how
he will make the downs resound this summer.
But I've done all I can do — which was to put a
word of warning in a letter to Quentin against
philandering, saying take Clive as an example, &
see how he bores people; which I daresay will
lie about in the Hotel de Londres & bring my head to
the block. In duty to you I went off to

1306

Chelsea the other day, first to Mauron's lecture at Argyll House,
then to sit with the MacCarthys, then back to dine at
Argyll House, then home to bed with Waley. What an
afternoon — the lecture rather stiff to a mixed crowd of fashion &
salt salt, poor Faith there without a chin, & then Mrs Maclagan
& other very highly furred women; & the French Embassy &
Ethel Read & so on — As for Molly — do we all look like old
women now, sitting by the open window, sadly reminiscing &
sighing & getting up with difficulty? I was taken aback,
to think she is 6 months younger than I am; & I feel as young as a
flea. Her sorrows seem many. I washed my hands under a photograph
of Philip Ritchie. Desmond came in from lecturing at Cambridge,
without any teeth, or only single ones here & there, & began
undressing in the drawing room, as he was dining with Lady
Lovelace at 8 — which it was then 10 to. But I find them
congenial — & there were Rachel & Dermod — she has been acting &
he has a just bought a skeleton — "That's where our money
goes to," Molly said; "one's children must have skeletons, &
skeletons are dreadfully expensive". I find them more congenial
than good kind simple worldly Sibyl; who had George Moore
but there was Sir Arthur too, whose conversation, though
full of substance, lacks atmosphere. George Moore sat in
his chair like an old baby with a bib; however we had
a little literary talk, & paid each other compliments. & now he
has given me a book. But the thing you'll like to hear about
is the resurrection of Sydney Waterlow. He came in the
other night, having made it up with Leonard. — But I don't
know that there's anything to say. He remains, like the pyramids,
untouched. First he started abusing us all — at least lamenting
the complete failure of our generation in every way; & said
he was now cynical, sceptical, & independent. No one influences
me any more, he said, blowing out his cheeks, & then suddenly began

booming & bellowing in the old way about Spenglers masterpieces (neither you or Duncan have ever read them) & how his life was completely changed by them, & he sees, or thinks he sees, the meaning of everything. He hopes to become Ambassador at Athens (but this is a profound secret — dont go telling it to the Cruthers) & we are dining with him at his Club next week. He would like to talk about his change of view. And then I saw Hugh Walpole (all this is for you; & then neither you nor Duncan really care a battered fig for me — its a question of being magnets & being steel, if you understand, but I'm getting colder & colder) Hugh ~~the~~ came to tea. His version of Angus was very funny. Angus was so lackadaisical & so qualifying & so uncertain if he could get up in time & so certain that he was about to get another job that Hugh, who liked him, ~~at~~ thought that he was clearly unwilling to take the place, & so gave it away to a Major in the army. He says its clear that Angus has some ~~other~~ ~~was~~ reason for not wishing to take any place which works sub-consciously. I said he thinks he is the Racine of our time, to which Hugh agreed. I'm afraid Hugh wont altogether do — when you can make him. He's own brother under the skin — its a nice pink skin though — of Rose Macaulay & the late Lucy Clifford — I mean he will talk about reviews & sales & dingy dirty literary shop, & drags me in; who am naturally so pure. Then (I'm now over the fire indoors) the telephone rang, & who should it be but Sir George Duckworth. It was lunch time, but he kept me a good 20 minutes, first asking me to lunch to meet some literary cove, French people, who had heard of Leonard & of me; & then going on & on & on. "Where's Clive? In France? But who's she living with? dear old Nessa? And her boy? Which boy? The painter? d'you say? Is he a Good painter? Well its too soon to tell, I suppose. How I should like to run over & stay with her!" I've just had my last tooth out; & they've put in what they call a transformation — temporary of course — to last three months. Meanwhile my

130c

teeth fall out when I talk: when I eat: when I telephone.
Margaret — I want to come & see you. We're hoping to
settle in Connaught Square —" At last, at last I
dropped the telephone; he puffs & blows like a
sea-horse; I daresay all his teeth were on the
floor at the end.

We're here, as I've said; divinely lovely, the country, & we've
been picking blue bells in Laughton woods. Then we
dropped in (Leonards incorrigible love of paying
calls in the country) at Charleston & saw
Raymond & Frankie, who say they are uproariously
happy & content, but seemed glad of an interruption;
so we go to tea tomorrow. Such is life here — &
no sooner had we turned into the village last
night, than Widow Hawkesford stopped us — but
I like the widows of Vicars, carrying wreaths for
their husbands tombs; & on the table here was a
card from Nelly Cecil who had called yesterday.
& wants us to lunch. I'm not sure how long
Sussex will be tolerable; but then I'm
wriggling with rage. Philcox now says he
cant get my rooms done by August — so
I shant get them till Christmas — a whole

teeth fall out when I talk; when I eat; when I telephone. Margaret – I want to come & see you. We're hoping to settle in Connaught Square –" At last, at last I dropped the telephone; he puffs & blows like a sea-horse; I daresay all his teeth were on the floor at the end.

We're here, as I've said; divinely lovely, the country, & we've been picking blue bells in Laughton woods. Then we dropped in (Leonard's incorrigible love of paying calls in the country) at Charleston & saw Raymond & Frankie, who say they are uproariously happy & content, but seemed glad of an interruption; so we go to tea tomorrow. Such is life here – & no sooner had we turned into the village last night, than Widow Hawkesford stopped us – but I like the widows of Vicars, carrying wreaths for their husbands tombs; & on the table here was a card from Nelly Cecil who had called yesterday & wants us to lunch. I'm not sure how long Sussex will be tolerable; but then I'm wriggling with rage. Philcox now says he cant get my rooms done by August – so I shant get them till Christmas – a whole

(This is the last page) 130c v

year worked, owing to Kennedy & Durrant; & my chief pleasure in life knocked on the head. All the same I shall buy a table, a side board a cupboard, a chair, & a complete set of crockery at Aubagne.

I say – how you've spoilt me for the ordinary run of brats! Poor dumpy good clever Judith (Stephen). I thought I must have a little childish wit; merry Angelica as I do; but one might as well have old Roy to tea. Lord, I wish I didn't miss you & your blood as much as I do: for never a thought do they give me.

Leonard now says, with his love, that we shall come on June 5th for a week & hope to find you alone. The Jenger is said now to be perfect.

There's lots more gossip but I haven't the face to write any more; besides you haven't read all this, & poor dear Duncan cant make head or tail of it.

B.

NYPL
HAMILL 2/10/68

1929

126

52,
Tavistock Square,
W.C.1
Telephone: Museum 2621

Monday
May
28th

Dearest,

I have not heard from you, so I dont know if you expect us on the 5th: but we shall come, unless we hear to the contrary. They have taken off your train, & we reach Marseilles at about 7 am— an unearthly hour. So we shall take the train out or a car, & join

Dont on any account come & meet us -

may expect to see us in the
course of the morning.
Let me know if you want me to
bring you anything.
By the way did Angelica get a
pen?
I suppose one need only bring
thin clothes - It is roasting hot
here. Youll keep all news
till we meet, as they say.
Leonards mother has again fallen down,
& we have got to go off to Worthing to
see her.
Love - how nice to see a dolphin
again!

B.

NYPL
HAMILL 2/10/68

52,
Tavistock Square,
W.C.1
Telephone: Museum 2621

Jacks money	33 - 6 - 8
Chem. &c.	4 - 11 - 9
Curtains	2 . .
painting	25 . .
	31 . 11 . 9

1929

130a

52 Tavistock Square.

Saturday June 30th

Dearest Dolph:

At any moment I shall have to stop & let in Saxon, but if I dont begin to write, God knows when I shall. Such is London life. Take this afternoon for instance. I thought I would go see the Sickerts. Naturally they were out. Turning to go to the National Gallery, I ran slap into Saxon, who therefore is coming at 5; I went to the National Gallery; saw Clive back going up the stairs; decided that all contemplation was impossible; & so made do with the bust of your grandfather — a portentous object, — other Cadavers in the National Portrait Gallery. There is a mint of things to tell you. Before I am engulfed, let me first ask if you have got a receipt from the Pottery man at Aubagne. They wont deliver it unless we produce it; & he never sent us any — perhaps it came after we left; & no doubt you destroyed it. So help us all. Yes — there is Saxon.

But no — it was nobody. Never mind, he'll be here in a minute.

Life has been very interrupted. There is Christabel — Clive — Vita — now Roger's back. You never write to me, so how do I know what you want to hear about? Politics? Nurses, William Jowitt then. Indeed —— another door bell. Yes. Saxon.

It is now 6.30 & Saxon has gone to meet

Barbara who is going with him to Paris tomorrow to meet the children. Theres only one person in the world I want to see & that is Angelica, so I am glad to hear that she will soon be in this Island (for of course England is an Island.) William Jowitt is what I was going to talk about. London rings with his infamy. We went to a Labour Party party the other night, held in cold weather in the vast Friends house in Euston Road. Well it was a deplorable ugly sight, as far as sights go — so much sweat, so much energy, so much deformity, so little of the elusive & transitory beauty which I love. I mean, there they stand up in rows — young women in short red flannel knickerbockers — young men in sweaters. However, suddenly a voluminous green woman bore down & said Vanessa? I said no. So she said Virginia? We used to know each other — I was Molly Bell. And now you're in the Cabinet I said, referring to Charles who is there, wearing a vast carnation: And isn't it splendid to feel that the future is with us! she said. And then I made off, crossing a windy court yard, with fish swimming in a shallow fountain. One was caught by a young man. And I ran into Dora Sanger — into Alice Russell, & into an obliterated female called Low; & suddenly a stout fashionable couple closed upon me, & after a painful hesitation, grasped my hand. There were the Jowitts, universally cut, abused, fallen among strangers, & embracing the wolves as friends & comforters. Leslie told me an astonishing story: Even in well appointed houses there are black beetles she said. And I had German measles. One night

NYPL

The telephone rang. I answered it. I saw the beetles coming. You know how they come — First they hesitate; then they begin running. "The Prime Minister has offered me the Attorney Generalship" said William on the telephone. "Shall I accept?", Now what would one do with the beetles coming nearer & nearer? So I shrieked yes — I assure you, they were round my ankles." So that you see is the true story. And her face was wrapped in a towel because she had German measles.

And now I must wash & go off to dine with Roger. I daresay you know more about Roger than I do. Leonard says he is going to do a cure now; but he has only been 3 days in London, — one he ~~+~~ spent going to Bristol, another he spends going to Aberdeen, & then he's off.

No doubt you will find me in precious hot water when you come back — Clive. Yes. I've ~~[illegible]~~ wrought upon Christa's feelings & Clive is going to be spoken to. In fact, Christa entirely agrees. She dined alone with him; & he had a letter from Paris, & did nothing but finger it & say Have you ever been jealous? Have you ever been in love? This is from a girl of twenty. I assure you I have never been so happy in my life, until Christa felt like an old gramophone record. Everybody feels the same, she said. It may be, she said that he takes drugs. He ~~[illegible]~~ leaves the room very often. But I said That's all nonsense. What he wants is that some lovely & witty, young married women should laugh him. Nobody is impressed by these loves of yours. In fact, we are all bored. Can't you take a pull on yourself — write a history of French literature — or something? This is what Christa is going to do. She turned her face in

131b v

her hand, & I think, murmured a few broken prayers.

But I must finish this.

I will bless you for ever if you will see about my windows. I have caused great consternation by alluding to my villa in France — not that people mind my going, but it shakes their hope in London.

Oh there's Angus. I think that man passes belief. I send Hugh, who promises to see him in the autumn. I tell this to Angus, & he begins frightening & hearing, & says he thinks Hugh is absolutely incomprehensible. He has been offered a tutors job at La Touquet Touquet; but boggles at it, because it may mean buying new clothes. Meanwhile he has gone & told Alice Ritchie, quite gratuitously, that I dislike her — & she is much upset. How can you explain him? — no malice, but a mere trickle of invertebrate rattility — a positive danger in the road.

Well, Dolphin, do write; & come soon. Meanwhile I hope for Angelica — adorable sprite — I dont think you like her half as much as — no, it's Judith I really adore. Poor hobgob.

yr B

Remind me to tell you an amazing story of the Keynes, & Charleston.

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HAMILL 2/10/68